



FEMA

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DISASTER NEWS

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DISASTER VICTIMS OF FRAUD SHOULD CONTACT CONSUMER PROTECTION LINE

EAST LANSING, MI - If your home or business was damaged in the May 20-24 storms, floods and tornadoes and someone appears at your door claiming to be a representative of any federal or state disaster assistance program, ask for official identification.

F/Lt. Ralph J. Hobrat of the Michigan State Police Emergency Management Agency Division explains, “We know there may be con artists out there ready to take advantage of people who have suffered from this recent disaster. We urge anyone who suspects any attempt at fraud to contact the Michigan Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division at **1-877-765-8388**, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.” People can also file official complaints of fraud by completing forms available on the Attorney General’s website, www.michigan.gov/ag.

“Depending on your needs, inspectors from one or more agencies may visit your home after you’ve called FEMA to register for disaster assistance,” said Marianne C. Jackson, federal coordinating officer. “Both FEMA and U.S. Small Business Administration inspectors will show you an official photo ID to prove their identity. Never let anyone inspect your home without first seeing such identification.”

Some people may show up at your door and insist that you make expensive or unnecessary repairs. Others may offer to process your disaster application for a fee. Remember, disaster inspectors do not recommend repairs and NEVER charge a fee for any inspection of your home.

If you would like to verify someone’s identity as an inspector, call the FEMA Helpline toll-free at **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)** or TTY: 1-800-462-7585 for hearing and speech impaired, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

[NOTE TO EDITOR: A list of the 19 disaster-declared counties is available upon request.]

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On March 1, 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. FEMA’s continuing mission within the new department is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages Citizen Corps, the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.